

Welcome!



*Brian Capaloff
Service User Involvement Officer*

Welcome to a special edition of the LinkLiving Newsletter!

This newsletter focuses on service user involvement and includes real life stories

Jamie's Story

Jamie started volunteering for LinkLiving as a peer educator in 2011. At the time he was suffering from depression and was looking for something to help lift him out of the rut he was in.

Volunteering helped Jamie with his lack of confidence and offered him opportunities to be involved in different projects. The new found confidence allowed Jamie to visit local schools to share his story and inform other young people about the challenges of independent living.

shared by some of LinkLiving's service users about the opportunities that involvement can bring.

From interviewing, volunteering, attending events and being part of discussions on how we improve services, getting involved can have a positive impact on both service users experiences and on the services they are part of.

If you are interested in getting involved please contact your support worker.



*Jamie Graham
Employability Project
Worker*

In 2015 he took up post as an Employability Project Worker with LinkLiving. The service supports 16-25 year olds in voluntary roles which provide life skills and help the volunteers gain qualification.

Jamie said: "The Volunteer support staff helped me gain my confidence back and I owe a huge thanks to LinkLiving and the Volunteers for supporting my journey"

Liza's Story!

Liza Quinn was referred to the supported self help service which supports people who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Counselling and supported self help can help people think things through and see things more clearly.

The self-help coaches have been asked to work specifically with carers and parents who are supporting individuals with autism. Liza was one of these and she received support from Rachel Riddle one of LinkLiving's Self Help Coaches.

Liza is a parent who was determined to improve the experience of children and adults who were seeking/dealing with a diagnosis

She wanted to create a place where parents could come together to support each other and work together to campaign to get the resources they need.

With the support from the self-help coaches Liza's managed to gain her confidence back and has set up a charity called Autism Rocks Fife. The charity has already been recognised in its first year through award nominations.

Liza and her team have been actively raising funds to open a centre in Fife that will promote and provide understanding, acceptance, inclusion, education and offer support to children and adults with autism and their families

We are delighted that Liza now brings her expertise to the Steering Group for the Self-Help Service.

For more information on the Self Help Service or Autism Rock contact Rachel Riddle on 01592 644048



John's Story!

John Laidlaw has been a service user with LinkLiving since May 2011 and receives support from our Midlothian Service.

John played a key part in the planning of our first Staff and Service User joint conference and wanted to share what LinkLiving means to him and the impact the support has on his life.

"I have a rare genetic disorder called Prader Willi Syndrome (PWS) which means that my brain does not send signals to my stomach when I am full. Along with other problems associated with PWS affecting mobility and behaviour, my diet and weight are constantly monitored.

As both my parents work full time, my younger sister has become my full time carer. She looks after me at home and tries to keep the peace but mostly enjoys bossing me around and keeping me out of trouble. Having LinkLiving's support means that, for 8 hours a week, my sister has time she can spend with her friends and not have to worry about me for a few hours.

Get involved in interviews!

LinkLiving involves Service Users in the recruitment process to ensure the people we appoint are aligned with our values and can meet the aspirations of the people who receive support.

Service Users are given full training on our recruitment and selection process and are part of the selection panel.

I used to weigh over 120kg but with regular support from LinkLiving I can go to my bowling group, indoor sport and walks helping to keep my weight under 100kg since late 2015.

LinkLiving's support has been a great benefit to me in allowing me to meet new people and build my confidence. The support staff are wonderful and always supportive and friendly. My key worker, Andy McIntosh has, in particular shown great understanding and interest in my condition and is always encouraging, supportive and has a great sense of humour!

In April 2015 I was asked to play a part in LinkLiving's first ever service user conference at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. I enjoyed this very much and appreciated that users were being asked to contribute.

My experience with LinkLiving has been positive and beneficial from the outset and I am sure will continue in the future"

Caroline Keys, a service user from the Midlothian Service recently sat on the interview panel. She said – "I enjoyed my day interviewing and he got the job. I asked some questions that were important to me and got some good experience from the day. I was pleased that Link involved me in this"





Picture: Boab the Cat relaxing at Dougall Court

DIY SOS!

Over the past few months the team and residents at Dougall Court have given the house some much needed home improvements.

There were two rooms that were not being used so they have now been decorated and furnished. It was really important that the service users got involved and that the furnishings reflect the residents taste.

Residents, Lorraine and Elsie chose the furniture and Raymond, another resident put his handyman skills to the test putting it together.

Christmas Party!

Jean Logan, along with other service users from the Edinburgh Mental Health Service and Comely Green, attended the Christmas Party on 4 December 2015. The Party was held at RAF club in Edinburgh.

Here is what Jean said: "There were some people I knew and others I had yet to meet.

Lorraine is using one of the rooms for her art work and Raymond is learning to use the computer in the study. The resident cat, Boab has been trying out all the new chairs in turn! The next task is to choose some plants for the sun room.

Raymond said: "I will be able to check what is on at the cinema using the computer"

Lorraine said: "I like the wallpaper and it is a good room for some peace and quiet"

I sat with a lovely lady called Carol and we had a good time chatting. The buffet went fast and the karaoke was competitive and the dancing was popular. I didn't dance much though as I wanted to enjoy the atmosphere. There was also a raffle and Roger Phethean handed out t-shirts. I had a great time!"

Special thanks to the contributors of the newsletter: Jamie Graham, Liza Quinn Caroline Keys, the residents at Dougall Court and Jean Logan.

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